Migration Advisory Committee call for evidence: EEA-workers in the UK labour market
Cancer Research UK response (October 2017)

In 2016/17, Cancer Research UK spent £432 million on research in institutes, hospitals and universities across the UK. Our research covers all aspects of cancer and this is achieved through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses. Research into new and more effective ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer is at the heart of our plan to see 3 in 4 people survive their cancer for 10 years or more by 2034. It is crucial that the UK maintains its excellent science base and that the cancer research workforce across Europe and around the world can continue to work together to make the best use of our pooled talent and resources.

We welcome the focus on science, research and innovation in the Government's white paper on the Industrial Strategy and the science and Brexit paper. Research fundamentally improves the nation's health and, as such, delivers savings to Government by reducing the incidence of disease or limiting its impact. The success of the Industrial Strategy will be dependent on having a migration system that enables the UK to attract, recruit and retain global scientific talent at all professional levels.

For the purposes of this response, we focus on our funded research community rather than CRUK's internal employees. To inform our work on researcher mobility, we engaged with our research community in March and April this year. This included an online survey with more than 600 respondents and interviews with the research workforce as well as those responsible for their recruitment processes[1]. From this engagement, we developed our position statement on researcher mobility, which can be found in Appendix 1.

We want to reiterate our intention to work with you during the reviews of both EEA workers and international students. We would be happy to engage with our research community on any issues that might arise or develop any further evidence which may help with your review. We will submit further evidence to you[2], both as CRUK and as a member of the cross-sector group, when this becomes available.

Based on the evidence we have gathered so far, our response focuses on the following key points:

1. The Government's priority should be to ensure that we can attract, recruit and retain global scientific talent at all professional levels regardless of their nationality.
2. Once we leave the EU, the UK Government will be able to design an immigration system which considers both EEA and non-EEA migration. This should not involve rolling out the current non-EEA system for EEA nationals, but instead presents an opportunity to design a new system for all types of migration.
3. Any future immigration system should enable both short and long-term movement of the research workforce to ensure continued collaboration with international partners.
4. Encouraging the continued development of the scientific workforce should be a Government priority. UK science and research workforce benefits the UK economy, population and patients.

Our global research workforce

CRUK funds postgraduate students and research workforce from a global pool to ensure that we are working with the very best minds to conduct the highest quality research (see case study 1). Non-UK nationals are a significant and valuable part of our workforce dedicated to beating cancer sooner: 46% of our PhD students and half of our research fellows are from outside of the UK[3]. The mix of UK,

[1] The survey was sent to our funded research workforce in March 2017 and we had responses from UK, EEA and non-EEA nationals at all professional levels including group leaders, PhD students, postdoc researchers, clinicians, research nurses and many more. We captured information about their global movements, key considerations when relocating and information about their status here in the UK.
[2] This will include case studies from our clinical trials units and Centres and our funded workforce later in 2017.
[3] This is from internal data collected by our Research and Innovation Directorate in July 2016.

European and international talent within our research community is vital for the sharing of best practice, expertise and skills. It also fosters international collaborations.

The UK benefits from recruiting a talented research workforce who have received specialist training from centres outside of the UK. Such recruitment is particularly important and is sometimes necessary in areas of science where the UK has a national skills shortage such as researchers working in computational biology and big data[4,5].

Case study 1 – Dr Sonia Rocha, University of Dundee
Dr Sonia Rocha has been a Cancer Research UK Senior Research Fellow since 2011. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Portugal and her PhD in Switzerland, before moving to the UK in 2000 to complete her post-doctoral training. Dr Rocha is now a Professor at the University of Dundee, where she and her team are working on hypoxia and inflammation in cancer.

Her team represents some of the most promising international talent in the field: including PhD students from the UK, Italy, Russia and Indonesia, a post-doctoral student from Argentina and a laboratory technician from Portugal. This international make up is key to the group's success. "Experience and ways of thinking from different countries move research forward" says Dr Rocha.

Dr Rocha's research laboratory has published over 45 scientific papers since 2005 and made significant breakthroughs in our understanding of cancer, including the identification of potential new ways to target treatments.

A higher proportion of our funded research workforce are non-UK EEA than non-EEA. Taking our Fellows as an example, the breakdown is 49% UK, 39% non-UK EEA and 12% non-EEA. During our engagement with our research community, we explicitly asked why we recruited from the UK, EEA and non-EEA and the particular differences between the candidates from each area.

The majority of the answers were centred on two key themes:

1. **"We recruit the best and we do not care about the nationality"**
Features of the current non-EEA system, such as the PhD-level exemptions, make us able to fund from outside of the EEA for specific roles. This is very helpful as it enables those responsible for recruiting these posts to be able to look beyond nationality and focus on the merit of the individual.

Furthermore, many of our research workforce are already able to stay in the UK because of their partners, Indefinite Leave to Remain, permanent residency status or other reasons when they are recruited for roles. Employers will therefore only specify whether the person has the right to work in the UK or not, not what nationality they are. Discussions around colleagues' or employees' nationalities is therefore only based on conversations or assumptions, rather than tracked/focused efforts to recruit certain nationalities to their organisations.

2. **"We focus on recruiting from the UK and EEA because it's free"**
Many employing organisations restrict their employees' ability to recruit from outside of the EEA due to the cost incurred to both the individual and organisation. Employees therefore have to make business cases for why certain roles should be recruited from outside of the EEA.

These themes suggest that the driver behind the higher proportion of EEA nationals (comparatively to non-EEA nationals) within our research workforce is the current EEA freedom of movement

[4] 'Bio-informatician' and 'informatician' are included on the Shortage Occupation List, valid from 6th April 2015
[5] Medical Research Council and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (2014) Vulnerable Skills Survey 2014

arrangement rather than any particular characteristic of EEA workers. However, there might still be roles where the EEA workers are the best persons for the job and are therefore recruited over non-EEA (and therefore fit in Theme 1). The proportion of these are unknown.

These conclusions highlight that the Home Office should not simply roll out the current non-EEA immigration system for EEA nationals. This system is expensive for the research workforce and resource-intensive for the employers who recruit them (such as institutes and universities). This is particularly an issue for roles below PhD-level which there are no exemptions for in the current non-EEA system. This includes technical roles as well as roles involved in the running of our clinical trials.

The detailed work done by Russell Group on the technical workforce outlines the key concerns around the technicians working within research[6]. We plan to supplement this work with case studies (to be submitted later in 2017) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the research workforce based at our Clinical Trials Units and Centres, where most of our non-PhD level roles are based. For example, we fund research nurses and clinical trials coordinators which would not be skilled at PhD-level. However, these roles are essential for the management and success of these clinical trials.

Recruitment data and practices

CRUK funds the research workforce through grants to universities and independent research institutes, such as the Francis Crick Institute. Our research workforce therefore are not direct CRUK employees and we do not routinely collect data on the breakdown of their skill level and nationality. For recruitment data and detailed information about recruitment practices, we suggest the MAC engages with the following sources:

- ***Higher education institutions (HEI):*** Russell Group and Universities UK would be able to provide a detailed breakdown of the staff, skill level and nationality of the HEI workforce as well as outlines of recruitment practices for different types of posts.
- ***Independent research institutes:*** The Francis Crick Institute, Institute of Cancer Research and the Wellcome Sanger Institute.
- ***Hospitals:*** Health service bodies (e.g. NHS England, NHS Digital, NHS Employers) and professional bodies (e.g. the Royal College of Physicians, the Society and College of Radiographers).

We would very much like to continue to work with you to collect further case studies or facilitate meetings if helpful.

International collaboration and short-term movement

Although our research workforce is mostly recruited on long-term contracts (of more than a year), we also collaborate with international partners on specific research projects which required short-term mobility. This can involve extensive travel between countries involved in the specific research projects to train staff and students, share data and expertise and use equipment not available in all countries involved.

This flow of talent globally is an essential part of the research environment and international movement is a feature of most researchers' careers and professional development. 72% of UK-based researchers spent time at non-UK institutions between 1996 and 2012[7]. In 2016, our survey respondents had travelled *more than 1000 times outside of the UK* for these collaborations.

[6] Russell Group's work is available here: http://russellgroup.ac.uk/policy/policy-documents/technical-workforce-and-brexit/
[7] Elsevier, International comparative performance of the UK research base, 2013

This movement of the research workforce between countries also develops valuable networks. Networks are crucial for the building of collaborative partnerships which are common place and often necessary in many fields of science including cancer, where nearly 50% all UK research involves international collaboration[8]. In February 2016, CRUK researchers were partnering with over 400 different organisations based in EU countries [9].

These collaborations enable sharing of knowledge and expertise, as well as research materials, equipment and data. They also support training, the running of pan-EU clinical trials and establishment of consortia set up to inform policy[10]. The importance of such collaboration is shown by its impact on the UK's research outputs: nearly 50% of the UK's scientific publications have non-UK authors and the impact of these papers is significantly higher than the average impact of UK papers[11]. It is therefore vital that any future immigration system enables this collaborative approach to continue through extensive short- and medium-term movement.

Economic, social and fiscal impacts

The UK is currently a world-class destination for scientific research[12,13] and the global scientific workforce is key to this success. We produce 16% of top quality published research findings with less than 1% of the world's population[14] and rank second in the world for the quality of our scientific research institutions[15].

Research fundamentally improves the nation's health and therefore delivers savings to Government by reducing the incidence of disease or limiting its impact. This was highlighted in the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy that life sciences research is not only good for the economy, but improves public health and can play a key role in NHS sustainability.

Life sciences also contribute more than £60bn a year to UK GDP with annual exports of £29.5bn[16]. Specifically for cancer research, every pound invested in cancer-related research by the taxpayer and charities returns around 27p to the UK economy each year[17,18]. This includes stimulating regional economies by funding research across the UK. Last year, CRUK spent over £23 million on research in the North West of England, over £41 million in East Anglia and over £33 million in Scotland.

Our funding leverages substantial inward investment through R&D collaborations and direct and indirect support for clinical trials. This demonstrates our strong commitment to improving patient lives through research and the important contribution of medical research funders to UK life sciences and the economy. In the last 5 years, the research workforce funded by charities created at least 60 spin out companies and produced 300 medical products including drugs and medical devices[19].

For more information, please contact Camilla Pallesen, Policy Adviser, email: camilla.pallesen@cancer.org.uk or tel: 0203 469 5272.

[8] https://www.ohe.org/publications/exploring-interdependencies-research-funders-uk
[9] Based on most recent data available from Researchfish, a self-reporting tool for researchers, including those receiving funding from CRUK
[10] Technopolis Group (2017) The impact of collaboration: The value of UK medical research to EU science and health
[11] Elsevier, International comparative performance of the UK Research Base, 2013
[12] Elsevier, International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base, 2013
[13] World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness report 2014-15
[14] Elsevier, International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base, 2013
[15] World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness report 2014-15
[16] ONS Balance of Payments data, (data for 2015)
[17] Health Economics Research Group (Brunel University), RAND Europe, and King's Policy Institute, medical Research: What's it Worth? Estimating the economic benefits of cancer-related research in the UK, 2014
[18] http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/publications/SpilloversFINAL.pdf
[19] Data obtained from AMRC impact data, a rich dataset collected by 40 AMRC members (covering 45% of AMRC members' annual research spend) via the online platform Researchfish, for grants they awarded between 2012 and 2014

Appendix 1: Cancer Research UK policy statement on researcher mobility

The UK is a world leader in life sciences. As the UK exits the European Union it's crucial that we remain at the forefront of research and innovation in the long term. Fundamental to achieving this is supporting a vibrant and collaborative research workforce. The mix of British, European and international talent within our research community is vital to share best practice, expertise and skills in the effort to further our understanding of diseases such as cancer and discover new ways to intervene. It's therefore vital that the global cancer research workforce can continue to work effectively together to make the best use of our combined talent and resources.

This paper sets out Cancer Research UK's position on research mobility to ensure the UK remains an attractive place to do research. These recommendations have been developed in consultation with our research community. This includes an online survey with more than 600 respondents and interviews with the research workforce as well as those responsible for their recruitment processes[20]. The appendix has further details of the themes which emerged from this engagement.

Summary

- Cancer Research UK (CRUK) funds postgraduate students and researchers from an international pool to ensure that we are working with the very best minds to conduct the highest quality research. 46% of our PhD students and half of our research fellows are from outside of the UK[21].
- The flow of talent globally is an essential part of the research environment and international movement is a feature of most researchers' careers and professional development. 72% of UK-based researchers spent time at non-UK institutions between 1996 and 2012[22].
- We welcome the focus on science, research and innovation in the Government's Industrial Strategy. The success of the Industrial Strategy will be dependent on having a migration system that enables the UK to attract, recruit and retain global scientific talent at all professional levels.
- We welcome the publication of the Government's policy paper outlining their position for EU nationals in the UK. However, there are some outstanding issues needing further clarification.
- We welcome the Migration Advisory Committee review of European Economic Area (EEA) migration to the UK and assessment of how a future immigration system can be aligned with the modern Industrial Strategy. In the meantime, the Home Office should make improvements to the non-EEA system to ensure we can continue to attract global scientific talent to the UK.
- Current Home Office immigration policies are based on reducing immigration through restrictions to the flow of non-EEA migrants to the UK. However, once we leave the EU, the UK Government will be able to design an immigration system which considers both EEA and non-EEA flows of migration. The Government's priority should be to ensure that we can attract, recruit and retain global scientific talent at all professional levels regardless of their nationality.

Recommendations

The following recommendations cover three areas:

1. The status of EEA nationals in the UK
2. The current non-EEA immigration system
3. The UK's future immigration system

[20] This survey was sent to our funded research workforce in March 2017. We had responses from UK, EEA and non-EEA nationals at all professional levels including group leaders, PhD students, postdoc researchers, clinicians, research nurses and many more. We captured information about their global movements, key considerations when relocating and information about their status here in the UK.
[21] This is from internal data collected by our Research and Innovation Directorate.
[22] Elsevier, International comparative performance of the UK research base, 2013

1. EEA nationals in the UK

We welcome the policy paper published which seeks to clarify the position of EU residents in the UK and UK nationals in the EU. We would welcome similar clarity for non-EU EEA nationals.

The Home Office should action the following to build on this paper:

1. **Provide certainty on the specific cut-off date for when EEA residents will no longer automatically be entitled to stay in the UK.** This should be the date the UK actually leaves the EU and should be agreed as part of the transitional agreements.
2. **Develop effective systems to process these applications building on existing Government data such as National Insurance and tax contribution data. Any increase in capacity needed at the Home Office to do so should be prioritised.**
3. **Ensure the interpretation of EEA nationals' continuous residence is not affected by periods spent abroad for study or research.** More than half of the EEA nationals who answered our survey had spent time outside of the UK in 2016 for work (either trips less than 3 months or trips lasting between 3 months and 1 year). This should be a key consideration when developing the additional criteria required for EEA nationals to apply for settled status.
4. **Transfer those with current permanent residency permits automatically to settled status.** These individuals have already gone through a rigorous process to receive their permits and should not have to go through this process again.
5. **Set a minimal cost of the application for settled status** – this should be minimal and no more than the cost of Permanent Residency (£65).

2. The current non-EEA system

While the UK should design a comprehensive immigration strategy for the UK following Brexit considering both EEA and non-EEA migration (see section 3), the Home Office should make efforts in parallel to implement solutions and recommendations in the current system.

Tier 1 (exceptional talent/promise)

- **Cancer Research UK's fellowships should continue to be fast-tracked for Tier 1 through the Royal Society.** The Tier 1 (exceptional talent) visa route enables the research sector to recruit global talent and ensure their eligibility for this visa from the start of their application.

Tier 2 (General – Skilled worker)

- **Continued exemptions and priority for PhD level roles in the Tier 2 route.** The research sector invests significantly in domestic skills development, but PhD level roles can often only be filled by international talent despite this investment. These PhD level roles make up a large part of our funded research workforce. The recruitment of global talent to these roles is enabled by the current exemptions and priority for PhD-level roles in Tier 2. Global talent in these roles are also vital for the upskilling of the UK workforce through their training and educational contributions.

- **There should be no increase of Immigration Skills Charge (ISC) for the research workforce.** Specifically, PhD-level occupations should continue to be exempt and there should be no increase in the Immigration Skills Charge for charities and higher education institutes. Using the higher education sector as a proxy for the entire research sector (which includes independent and government funded research institutes), the ISC would cost the sector £4.9 million for each year of the issued Certificates of Sponsorship; based on the upfront cost of the charge (£1000), this would be £24.5m per year. This £24.5m figure is equivalent to 1.5% of total funding from the

Research Councils, The Royal Society, British Academy and The Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2013-14[23].

- **The Home Office, BEIS and DfE should also work with the research sector to develop an appropriate mechanism which allows a significant proportion of the Immigration Skills Charge funds to return to the sector.** This will enable continued research capacity building required for the future of UK research.

- **Any changes to salary thresholds should not negatively impact charitable research funders' budgets.** If the minimum thresholds are increased and roles requiring PhD-level qualifications were not exempt, it is likely that Cancer Research UK-funded research institutes would need to increase the salaries of postdoctoral researchers – junior scientists that make up the largest single group of staff within these institutes – which would impact on their budgets and reduce the amount of research they would be able to fund. This scenario is likely to apply to other academic organisations. To protect the volume of academic research funded in the UK, pay thresholds should be kept at the 10th percentile for new entrant workers and 25th percentile for experienced workers.

3. Future immigration system

Current Home Office immigration policies are based on reducing immigration to the UK through non-EEA migrants to the UK. However, once we leave the EU, the UK Government will be able to design an immigration system which considers both EEA and non-EEA flows of migration. As part of the development of a new immigration system, the Home Office should ensure the following points are reflected.

The top priority for Cancer Research UK is to ensure that the Government designs an immigration system which enables us to attract, recruit and retain global scientific talent at all professional levels regardless of their nationality

A future immigration system should **include** the following features:

1. Mechanisms to recruit international staff with minimal cost, delay and uncertainty.
The Home Office should not simply roll out the non-EEA immigration system for EEA nationals. The current system is **expensive** for the researchers we fund and **resource-intensive** for the employers who recruit these researchers (such as research institutes and universities).

2. The most effective measure of skill and benefit of migrants coming to the UK
We recognise the previous recommendation of the Migration Advisory Committee to continue to restrict non-EEA migration by salary thresholds. However, salaries in the academic sector do not adequately reflect skill level or benefit of the work being undertaken. Some roles in the research sector are highly valued due to the niche expertise they bring from outside the UK, however, they would not meet the current Government salary threshold.

For example, one of our group leaders in Oxford recruited a postdoc researcher from Japan to lead one part of their research project due to the unique expertise of the Japanese lab in a technique vital to progress their research. The Home Office must therefore consider how to reflect different sector needs while developing a comprehensive strategy for all industries. This should also include an assessment of the different salary levels across the UK.

[23] According to HESA data

3. **Policies to enable partners and dependents of the research workforce to live, work and use public services in the UK.**

Over 75% of our survey respondents said that this is a key consideration when moving to another country. For the UK to continue to attract global talent, we must ensure their families are able to come with them to the UK and stay once they're here.

4. **Support to ensure that international students in the UK are able to take up firm job offers.**

Cancer Research UK funds more than 500 PhD students per year. 46% of these are not from the UK. These students drive research forward and are an important part of the research pipeline. It is vital for the UK scientific base that these talented students are able to stay in the UK and continue to contribute to the research that they have been working on once they have completed their PhD qualification. We are concerned that restrictions put on students once they finish their studies would impact how many of them would stay in the UK.

5. **Flexibility to enable extensive short- and medium-term movement of the research workforce.**

Nearly 50% of all UK cancer research involves international collaboration[24]. Cancer Research UK collaborates extensively with European and international partners. In 2016, the survey respondents had travelled *more than 1000 times outside of the UK* for collaborations (such as clinical trials), training of staff, use of equipment, verifying data and sharing knowledge.

6. **Recognition and support of the dependencies between skills development and the international research workforce in the UK teaching environment.**

Our global research workforce is involved in teaching and training students in the UK. In order to ensure we are able to upskill the domestic workforce, we must ensure the UK teaching environment is world-class, which includes continuing to collaborate internationally, attracting global scientific talent and enabling students to travel for education.

7. **Mechanisms to support non-UK research group leaders to bring members of their research group with them when they move to the UK.**

We want to ensure that we attract talented international group leaders. Some of these will already have established research groups outside of the UK. Their group members will be key to the success of their research. The UK Government should consider mechanisms for attracting these group leaders with their group members which UK research institutions are currently not able to do.

8. **Ability for the Home Office to capture and publish more detailed migration statistics to inform future immigration policy development.**

Increasing reliance has been placed upon migration statistics to develop immigration policy, particularly post-Brexit. The available measures, such as the International Passenger Survey and Home Office migrant journey report, are not comprehensive and adequate reflections of the value of migration to different sectors, such as research and innovation. Current statistics captured by the Home Office also do not cover short-term travel (less than one year) and data on EEA nationals. A future immigration system must capture data on this.

Devolved/regional immigration policy

Cancer Research UK does not believe that the Home Office should devolve immigration policies to the four nations. In our interviews with and survey of our research workforce, respondents outlined that being able to move employers and location is key to them and one of the reasons why they were attracted to come to the UK. Developing devolved or regional systems is likely to decrease the attractiveness of the UK to the research workforce in the future.

[24] https://www.ohe.org/publications/exploring-interdependencies-research-funders-uk